

TRU TeamWorks

September 2, 2004

A biweekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

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By the Numbers

Transportation and
disposal statistics are now
available on pages 3 and
4.

Ready, set, drop

The saying “one size fits all” is not accurate for TRU waste containers. TRU waste is stored in many different shapes, sizes and weights of Department of Transportation 7A Type A containers. Some waste is extremely large and would require extensive resizing to fit in currently certified Type A waste containers that are designed for the TRUPACT-II.

As a result, a larger transportation package known as TRUPACT-III (see the [October 2, 2003](#), issue of *TRU TeamWorks*) has been developed to address the larger containers of waste currently stored at generator sites across the country. This new package, when approved by the NRC, will transport waste containers specially designed to accommodate larger waste.

Washington Engineered Products Division (EPD) was tasked to design, build, test and certify two DOT 7A Type A containers (Standard Large Box 1 and 2 or SLB 1 and SLB 2) that will fit inside the TRUPACT-III. The SLB 2 has already been certified, and on Monday, EPD performed the final tests on SLB-1. This container measures 88 ¼” long, 58 ¼” wide, and 61 ¾” high and is designed so two SLB 1 containers can fit inside TRUPACT-III. It has a total maximum weight capacity of 9,500 pounds (including the container). All waste disposed of at WIPP must be in a DOT 7A Type A container.

To be certified as a DOT 7A Type A container, it must pass a variety of tests in accordance with the 49 CFR 173.465. The regulations allow for a new container to be used for each test, however, EPD used the same container for all tests. These tests include a stack test, where the container must support five times its gross maximum weight for 24 hours. A water spray test is performed to simulate approximately two inches of rain per hour. Next, a penetration test is performed involving a 131 lb. bar being dropped from 3.3 feet onto the most vulnerable part of the container. Finally, the container must undergo a number of drop tests. These involve dropping the container from a height of one foot onto each of the top four corners and then dropping it from a height of four feet on to what is perceived to be all of the containers weakest point or points. The SLB 1 successfully passed all the required tests, and the certification papers are currently being prepared.



One of four, one-foot drop tests performed on the SLB-1. The SLB successfully passed all required tests, sustaining only minimal damage.



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CCP operations at LLNL highlighted in newsletter

It was almost a year ago that Central Characterization Project (CCP) operations at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) began. Now they are winding down. On Wednesday, August 18, the CCP team completed final visual examination operations at LLNL and the Mobile Visual Examination and Repackaging Unit (MOVER) is now being processed for future reassignment to another generator site.

In honor of the work performed by CCP employees and vendors at LLNL, *S&D Monthly Newsflash*, an internal newsletter produced for LLNL employees, devoted a special edition featuring the TRU mobile vendors. By permission, the *Newsflash* special edition has been made available in its entirety to *TRU TeamWorks* readers.

Congratulations to all CCP employees and vendors at LLNL for a job well done.



Access the S&D Monthly Newsflash

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By the Numbers

Shipments scheduled* to
arrive at WIPP week of
09/05/04 - 09/11/04:

NTS - 1
RFETS - 12
SRS - 4

*subject to change

2,938 total shipments
received at WIPP as of
09/01/04

A record-breaking summer at WIPP

This summer, the Olympics are not the only place where records are being broken. August 15-21 was a banner week for WIPP Transportation, Facility Operations and Waste Handling Operations personnel. The groups managed the shipment and processing of 77 TRUPACT-IIs. This is the highest number of TRUPACT's ever processed at WIPP in a single week. The successful management of the shipment influx was no small feat and required excellent planning and coordination.

Randy Britain, Waste Operations manager, comments on the effort. "The Hazardous Waste Facility Permit limits the number of full TRUPACT-IIs on the surface at WIPP to 12," he notes. "With so many TRUPACT-IIs coming in that week, we knew we needed to coordinate our processing activities with other WIPP organizations to stay under that limit."

The Waste Handling team's efforts were aided by their coworkers in Transportation. Kim Jackson, WTS Transportation manager, explains, "Transportation personnel ensured that the shipments were scheduled to depart generator sites at certain times and arrived at WIPP within certain windows. This kept the site from becoming overloaded with TRUPACT-IIs awaiting processing."

Facility Operations' Central Monitoring Room personnel kept tabs on the shipments as they made their way to WIPP. Any delays would have been quickly reported to Waste Handling and Transportation for scheduling adjustments.

Saturday was the busiest day for all three crews, with 6 shipments, or 18 TRUPACT-IIs arriving that day alone. "We had several shipments from Hanford on that day delayed from an accident along I-80 in Wyoming," notes Jackson. "Through successful teamwork, all three groups were able to work around the shipment delays without exceeding our permit."

Britain agrees, "Before the week began, our team made sure that we had the staff available, trained and qualified to perform the required waste processing. Our planning also included staff to turn around empty shipments back to the generator sites. Empty TRUPACT-II's must be returned to service in a specific order and within a set timeframe to maintain the overall shipping schedule."

The influx of TRUPACT-IIs may have made the week hectic, but according to Jackson, "It was a great tryout in preparation for future shipment ramp ups. When INEEL begins shipping to the site again, we will regularly hit 87 TRUPACT-IIs per week."



A TRI-State truck leaves WIPP with empty TRUPACT-II containers.

Mining our own business

A common question posed by WIPP visitors and media is: “How much waste will be disposed of at WIPP?” The amount, specified in the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, limits WIPP waste capacity to 6.2 million cubic feet or about 175,000 m³. The WIPP repository design includes eight hazardous waste disposal units or panels, each containing seven rooms roughly the length of a football field (300-feet long, 33-feet wide and 13-feet high).

The Land Withdrawal Act did not, however, specify how quickly the panels could be constructed or filled. In the early '90s, planners projected WIPP would receive an average of 12 TRU waste shipments per week. Based on that, they assumed that only Panels 1-3 would be filled in the first 10 years of operation. In issuing WIPP's permit, NMED limited construction to Panels 1-4, plus access drifts, and limited waste disposal to Panels 1-3.

After 5 years of increased efficiency, WIPP has far surpassed original estimates: Panel 1 was filled and closed in 2003, Panel 2 is 60 percent full and construction of Panel 3 is nearly complete. Earlier this month, WIPP shipped and processed its highest weekly number of TRUPACTs: 77.

To meet disposal demands, DOE asked NMED in May 2003 for a permit change to allow stepped-up construction of Panels 5-8 and disposal of waste in Panels 4-7 during the current 10-year permit term (which began when WIPP opened in 1999). The permit change does not increase the repository design capacity.

Miners predict Panel 2 will be filled by January 2005. Sean White of WRES Permitting and Compliance adds, “This permit modification will allow WIPP to support ongoing risk reduction and TRU waste cleanup acceleration efforts in the DOE complex. We anticipate a draft permit from NMED this fall.”

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By the Numbers

Waste disposed in the WIPP underground as of 09/01/04:

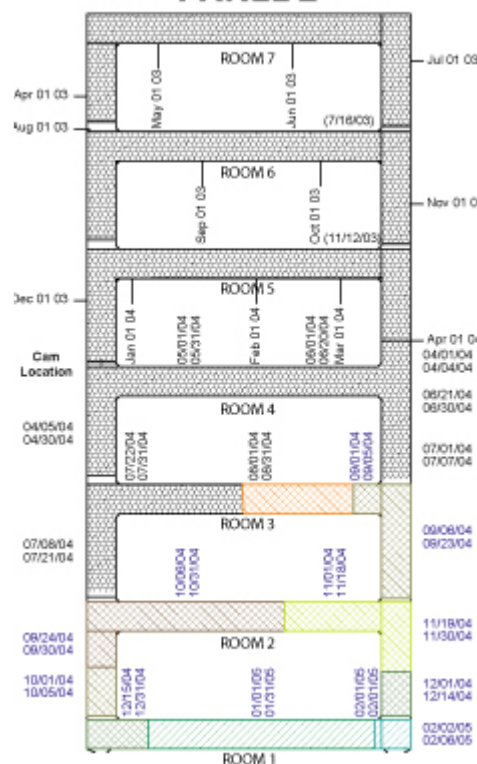
54,818 waste drums

3,526 standard waste boxes

1,170 ten-drum overpacks

23,406 cubic meters

PANEL 2



Panel 2 progress

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CBFO Employees Named to Safety and Health Committee

Safety is not a spectator sport. Participation by everyone is required and the CBFO plans to continue its quest for a gold medal in safety with the appointment of employees to the Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health (FEOSH) Committee.

The appointments make good on a recommendation from the 2004 WIPP Integrated Safety Management System Review Report to strengthen senior management involvement in the FEOSH Committee. "The FEOSH Committee's work is a shared responsibility of CBFO management and staff," said Acting CBFO Manager Paul Detwiler in the appointment letter. "It is important in helping to ensure a safe workplace for all of us working in CBFO."



The purpose of the committee will be to monitor and assist in the CBFO safety and health policies and program at the workplace. Those appointed include Lloyd Piper, Chuan-Fu Wu, Harold Johnson, Steve Casey, Russell McCallister, Eliberto Seguinot and Gloria Sena. The newly appointed FEOSH Committee members met on August 30 and elected Steve Casey as the committee's chairperson. Richard Farrell, acting as an ex-officio member, was selected as the group's recording secretary.

In addition to monthly safety meetings that are held by individual departments, LANL/CB and SNL-CPG, numerous organizations at WIPP exist in full or in part to monitor safety. Some of these organizations include the WTS Safety Awareness Committee, the CTAC Safety Committee, the Skeen-Whitlock Building Safety Committee, the Electrical Safety Committee, the Lessons Learned Working Group, the Executive Safety Council, the Time Out for Safety Committee, the Pollution Prevention Committee, the Plant Management Team, the WIPP Form Screening Committee, the Surface Management Council, Life Safety Code Committee, the Radiological ALARA Committee and the Nuclear Review Board.

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Retire your sticky notes

Alexander Graham Bell would be amazed if he could use a phone at WIPP. They serve the same purpose as his early version, called the electrical speech machine, but today's modern business phones have features well beyond what the inventor of the telephone probably ever dreamed of. But what about us? We use them to make calls and answer them when they ring, but do you know how to use its features to improve efficiency?

Here are some easy-to-use features of the phone and voice-mail system that can make our workloads easier and help us eliminate the collection of yellow, pink and turquoise sticky notes that frame our computer monitors.

Transferring a call

Not the right person to talk to? If you know who is, you can transfer a caller to someone else. While you have a caller on the line, press the Link button (on some phones this is called the Flash or Transfer button or can be done by simply depressing the hook switch); dial the person's four-digit extension and then hang up the phone. If you wish to tell the person you are transferring the call to who is calling, you can stay on the line and tell them and when you hang up the call will be transferred.

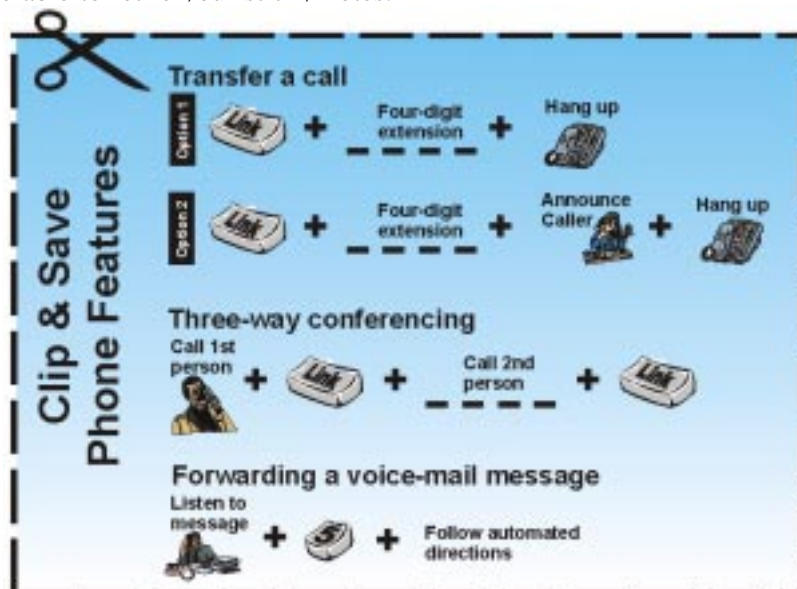
Three-way conferencing

Three-way conferencing is great for having a conversation once, rather than twice, and everyone hearing the same information. While you have the first person on the line, press the Link button, then dial the second person's four-digit extension. When the second person answers, press the Link button again. Both people should be able to hear you and each other.

Forwarding a voice-mail message

Some messages you have to hear for yourself. To forward a message to someone else, listen to the message and then press 5 for Copy. Simply follow the automated directions to designate what mailbox(es) it goes to and record introductory remarks.

Clip and save the quick reference card on this page for future use. There are many other features available on our telephone and voice mail system. Check with your manual to identify other useful features. You'll not only save yourself some time and energy, but you just might be able to retire your sticky notes.



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WIPP softball tournament results

The NTP Department softball team named “Hot Trash” won the WIPP softball tournament. Hot Trash defeated “Wasted Handlers” in the championship game 7-5 in eight innings. Each player on these top two teams received an Adidas sports shirt as the prize. The following are the Hot Trash team members with an indication of who played in the final game:

Tony Alston*
Cindi Becker*
Mario Carrasco*
Rick Castillo*
Deryl Palmer*
Debbie Freeze
Chris Gomez*

*played in final game

Paul Gomez*
John Haschets*
Tim Hedahl
Amy Johns*
Dean Mooney
Mark Pearcy*
Sheila Pearcy*
Tyrone Smith*
J. R. Stroble - Captain

Scenes from the WIPP softball tournament



Spirits were high inside the Hot Trash dugout.



Jessica Mireles (WTS) keeps tabs on the score.



Site nurse Anita Self, WTS (middle) and her twin daughters Kimberly Bryson (left) and Chris Juarez, WTS (right) joined in on the fun.



Alberta Farmer (L&M) is safe on first.



Jay Funderbruk (WTS) suffered fashion consequences for making the third out at bat. There was no “skirting” this punishment for any team member!



Beverly Watson (WTS) encountered technical difficulties during the tournament.

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Birthdays

Jim Walker (WTS) - September 3
Sue Bradley (WTS) - September 5
Joe Baca (WTS) - September 7
Diana Murray (WTS) - September 7
Cindy Ramirez (L&M) - September 7
***Tom Fabian (WTS)** - September 9

Priscella Ridenour (WTS) - September 9
Ava Holland (CBFO) - September 10
Gloria Sena (CBFO) - September 10
Cindy Becker (L&M) - September 11
Mike Knowles (WTS) - September 12
Bo Bowen (NCI) - September 12

Editor's note: **Tom Fabian insists that he does not have a birthday. According to Mr. Fabian, he was found under a cabbage leaf in Mother Goose's garden by elves and raised by a kind family that simply remembered the day he showed up on the hearth in their humble cottage. "As the family grew," he recalls, "They called it 'The Day We Found 'Ol Whatshisname On The Hearth Day.'" Mr. Fabian granted TRU TeamWorks permission to publish his "birth date" with the understanding that this publication is misrepresenting the truth of the matter.*

Parking lot safety reminder

Employees are reminded that the posted speed limit in the WIPP parking lots at the site and in town is 10 MPH. Whether you are driving a motorcycle, car, truck, or SUV, please take care to observe the speed limit and watch for pedestrians.